

STRUCTURAL TRANSFER IN THIRD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: THE CASE OF  
LINGALA-FRENCH SPEAKERS ACQUIRING ENGLISH

BY

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THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This paper tests the claims of Cumulative Enhancement Model, the ‘L2 status factor’, and the Typological Primacy Model in investigating how L1 Lingala, L2 French speakers express in English an event which took place and was completed in the past. The linguistic phenomena under study inform us that English uses the simple past in a past completed event while French and Lingala use the ‘passé composé’ and the remote or recent past, respectively. The study circumscribes the tense similarities and differences between the three languages. The research questions run as:

1. Which previously acquired language between the L1, L2, or both L1 & L2 overrides in L3 syntactic transfer?
2. Is the L2 the privileged source of syntactic transfer even when the L1 offers syntactic similarities with the L3?
3. Are subjects more accurate when communicating in explicit mode than in implicit mode? That is, do subjects make less transfer errors in a task that promotes reliance on explicit knowledge than they do in task that promotes reliance on implicit knowledge?

The findings of the study show that subjects used the simple past tense in the context of a past completed event. The use of the simple past tense in the context of a past completed event might be attributed to transfer from the L1 or might be considered as a consequence of positive learning. The results further show that subjects have transferred more explicit knowledge than implicit. And the results have ruled out the L2-status factor claim that the L2 is the privileged source of transfer in L3 acquisition.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **AUX** = Auxiliary
- **Cil.** = Ciluba
- **CEM** = Cumulative enhancement method
- **Engl.** = English
- **FT/FA** = Full transfer/ full access
- **Fr.** = French
- **HSD** = high school diploma
- **Im.Pst** = Immediate past
- **L1** = First language
- **L2** = Second language
- **L3** = Third language
- **Ling.** = Lingala
- **m** = month
- **Neg.** = negative
- **Pst.** = past
- **Recent pst.** = recent past
- **Remote pst.** = remote past
- **SC** = some college
- **SPr.** = simple present
- **Subj.** = subjunctive
- **TL** = Target language
- **TPM** = Typological Primacy Model
- **UG** = Universal Grammar
- **y** = year
- **2psSPP** = second person singular subject prefix pronominal
- **3ps.SPP** = Third person singular subject prefix pronominal
- **3pPl.** = Third person plural
- **Ø** = zero morpheme; deletion of morpheme

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper tests the claims of the Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM) by Flynn, Foley, and Vinnitskaya (2004), the ‘L2 status factor’ by Bardel and Falk (2007), and the Typological Primacy Model (TPM) by Rothman (2010, 2011) in investigating how L1 Lingala L2 French speakers express in English an event which took place and was completed in the past.

The work aims to test the claims of those three models of L3 acquisition in terms of source of transfer and determine the factor which takes precedence in determining the source of transfer when there is the potential for competition between multiple factors. The Cumulative Enhancement Model claims that previously acquired linguistic knowledge from both L1 and L2 positively impact the acquisition of any subsequent language. The ‘L2 status factor’ privileges and restricts the source of transfer from only the L2 while the Typological Primacy Model constrains transfer to the language that is perceived to be (psycho)-typologically closer to the L3.

The paper studies the population of twenty-five Lingala speakers who also speak French as L2 and who are learning English as L3, three languages of which two are Indo-European and one is a Bantu language. This is the first study which combines those three languages in the context of third language acquisition.

The linguistic phenomena under study inform us that English uses the simple past to talk about an event which took place in the past and was completed in the past while French and Lingala use the ‘passé composé’ and the past (remote or recent past), respectively. For the sake of this study, the simple past (historical past) in French is not considered as a potential factor that can trigger transfer because as Rowlett (2007) argues that changes in the spoken language in

French have taken place in the use of the “passé composé” in which, “The perfect has effectively replaced the past historic as a marker of past tense” (p.26). Furthermore, with reference to the economy of cognitive design and linguistic architecture (Flynn et al., 2004; Rothman, 2010) and in relation to the biological theory of language acquisition (Chomsky, 2007), it is observed as Rothman (2010) argues that,” The most economical linguistic option is always favored and its selection seems to be hardwired into human cognition” (p.271). It is postulated in this paper that the L2-speaking French subjects would resort to the passé composé to talk about a past completed event rather than the historical past (simple past) because the former is the option that is available to them and the parser would strongly and straightforwardly prefer the option which offers easier access.

Both French and English present some syntactic similarities in terms of form while they differ in terms of function. Their similarity is observed between the form of the ‘present perfect tense’ and the form of the ‘passé composé’ which are structured as ‘AUX HAVE/AVOIR + PAST PARTICIPLE’ in both languages. The differences are observed in their function; the ‘passé composé’ is used in French to talk about an event which took place and was completed in the past while the ‘present perfect tense in English expresses an event that started in the past but has some implication in the present. Whereas, Lingala and English show some syntactic similarities in terms of both form and function because the simple past in both languages are used to talk about a past completed event and in terms of form both languages use inflectional morphemes to morpho-syntactically mark the past tense. The study circumscribes the similarities and differences, in tense, between the three languages. The research questions are as follows:

1. Which previously acquired language between the L1, L2, or both L1 & L2 overrides in L3 syntactic transfer?



2. Is the L2 the privileged source of syntactic transfer even when the L1 offers syntactic similarities with the L3?
3. Are subjects more accurate when communicating in explicit mode than in implicit mode? That is, do subjects make less transfer errors in task that promotes reliance on explicit knowledge than they do in task that promotes reliance on implicit knowledge?

The predictions of the study permit to test the three models, specifically the descriptive and explanatory adequacies of the CEM, 'L2 status factor', and TPM.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BACKGROUND AND THE LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON**

This section provides a brief description of transfer in both L2 and L3 acquisition. It also discusses three syntactic models of L3 acquisition and presents some illustrations with some relevant studies. It finally discusses the linguistic phenomenon which motivates this study.

#### **2.1. TRANSFER IN SECOND (L2) LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Odlin (1989) offers the most comprehensive definition of transfer in SLA; he refers to it as, “The influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (p. 27). Transfer encompasses the influence of any previously acquired language in the acquisition of an additional one.

Research in cross-linguistic influence in second (L2) and third language acquisition (L3) has shown that the first language (L1) or any other previously acquired language may not only have a negative impact, but that it could also positively contribute to the acquisition of an additional language. Transfer involves then both positive and negative impacts.

Positive transfer is when the linguistic influence from an already acquired linguistic system yields a facilitative effect in the acquisition of an additional language. Del Mar Ramon (2009) claims that positive transfer is observed when the linguistic influence from a previously acquired language helps to acquire an additional language and when both languages show a few similarities in terms of their syntactic systems. Positive transfer results from the similarities which are observed or perceived between two linguistic systems.

Positive transfer is likely to favor easier and faster learning or acquisition of a linguistic feature which maps into both linguistic systems that are involved in the acquisition process. It is the familiarity with an aspect of a language that is similar to the linguistic system of the TL which renders the acquisition of that linguistic feature easier and faster to learn.

Negative transfer, however, is the result of linguistic mismatches that are observed between two systems whose influence generates erroneous forms/use in the TL. Negative transfer has a blocking, delaying, hindering, or inhibiting effect on the acquisition of an additional language. Unlike positive transfer, negative transfer is the result of the differences between a previously acquired language and the TL.

Five approaches to language transfer emerge within the innatist view (Cook1998; Cook and Newson 1996; Epstein, Flynn and Martshardjono 1996; Bley-Vroman 1990; Clahsen and Muysken 1986; Schachter 1998). They are: 1. Full transfer/ partial access, 2. No transfer/ partial access, 3. Full transfer/ full access (FT/FA), 4. Partial transfer/ full access and 5 Partial transfer/partial access.

Partial access view claims that only the UG plays a role in the L2 acquisition. The L1 does not influence the acquisition of an additional language. The interlanguage grammar is created based on the UG. The proponent of partial access such as Cook (1988) claims that, “Adult L2 acquisition is only constrained by UG insofar as universal properties can be accessed via the L1 grammar” (White, 2005, p.16).

Proponents of partial transfer account believe that only lexical categories and their linear orientation can be transferred but not the functional projections. This viewpoint is partially contradicted by the Weak Transfer Hypothesis. Eubank (1993) claims that both lexical and

functional categories are transferred except the values which are associated with functional categories.

The Full Transfer/ Full Access hypothesis claims that the L2 learners are influenced at their initial stage by the L1 linguistic system. It is (the late) interaction between the L2 input and access to UG which helps to restructure the L2 linguistic system. This view recognizes the role played by the UG in constraining the L2-acquisition (Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996).

Ringbom (1987), for instance, in his study of native speakers of Finnish and Swedish learning English found the following: (1) language distance has an impact on cross-linguistic influence, (2) the influence of an L1 is greater at early stages of acquisition than at later stage, (3) the influence of L1 is stronger at lower levels of proficiency and (4) the influence of the L1 tends to be stronger in more communicative tasks.

## 2.2. TRANSFER AND MODELS IN THIRD (L3) LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In this section are discussed the dominant literature on third language acquisition. The section is divided into two points. The first section discusses the main claims which underline literature on third language acquisition. The second section specifically depicts the main characteristics of the three models of syntactic transfer in third language acquisition.

### 2.2.1. TRANSFER IN THIRD (L3) LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Transfer in L3 varies depending on the domain and two languages are identified as source of transfer; the L1 or the L2. At the lexical level, it is documented that transfer may come from either one of the previously acquired languages.

Typological similarity is one of the variables which dictate the likelihood of language transfer in the context of third language acquisition. It is one of the prominent factors which have

been observed as cause of cross-linguistic influence in acquiring an additional language. Odlin (1989) thinks that language distance is one of the salient factors which determine the amount of time a learner needs to reach proficiency in a TL. The more two languages offer linguistic similarities, the more positive transfers are observed and the less time it takes the learner to master the TL.

The facilitative role that the typological closeness and congruent linguistic features of L1 and L2 offer in the acquisition process of the TL is documented (Jarvis & Odlin, 2000). Jarvis (2000), Poullisse (1990), and Debot (1992) have respectively shown in their studies that language typology dominates over other relevant variables when they intersect in the speech production of an L3 learner. For instance, they observed that language typology overrides variables such as the amount of L2 exposure and proficiency. Ringbom (1986) study showed that typology once more prevailed over the amount of exposure and frequency of use. Ringbom found that L1 Swedish speakers did not transfer any L2 Finnish lexical item in their L3 English production while L1 Finnish speakers heavily transferred from their L2 Swedish.

It was established in the aforementioned studies that the closeness of language typology between an L2 and an L3 more positively influences the acquisition process of the additional language regardless of the learner's length of exposure to the TL and his proficiency. Typologically closer and congruent languages as, L2 and L3, trigger positive transfer and thus facilitate the acquisition of L3 (Ecke, 2001; De Angelis & Selinker, 2001).

Psychotypology has to do with learner's perception of the linguistic distance which exists between either an L1 or an L2 and the TL. It is purely subjective since it depends on how a learner perceives the congruence of, say, linguistic form between his native language and the TL.

This perception might yield either a positive effect which facilitates the acquisition of the TL or a negative effect which impairs the acquisition of the latter. It is advocated and documented that transfer is likely to occur when two languages display congruent linguistic features, because the brain processes such features as old information which is retrieved in long term memory. However, when there are mismatches of forms, this is processed as new information and it requires more effort in order to be processed and stored in the long term memory.

Ellis (1994) claims that when a learner assumes that his L1 is closely related to the TL, there is a high likelihood for the L1 to trigger more transfer than when he assumes the opposite. Clearly, it is more probable to have less transfer when a learner assumes great linguistic distance between, say, his L1 and the TL in L3 acquisition. Kellerman (1983) found that the speaker's perception of language similarity which is psychological and does not necessarily reflect the actual linguistic distance between the languages, may trigger or constrain transfer in the acquisition of L3. Ringbom (2003) has restricted the importance of perceived typological distance in the transfer of lexis. He claims that when L2 and L3 offer a considerable number of common cognates, the speaker perceived both languages as similar and this psychotypological effect favors transfer.

### 2.2.2. MODELS OF L3-ACQUISITION

This paper tests the claims of Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM) by Flynn, Foley, and Vinnitskaya (2004), the 'L2 status factor' by Bardel and Falk (2007), and the Typological Primacy Model (TPM) by Rothman (2010, 2011). All these theories are applicable in the context of multilingual language acquisition and they are related to the acquisition of any language beyond the second one. These three models agree upon the influence of, at least, one previously

acquired language. They, however, depart from one another by the way they formulate their predictions.

#### 2.2.2.1. CUMULATIVE ENHANCEMENT MODEL (CEM)

The CEM (Flynn, Foley, and Vinnitskaya; 2004) claims that language learners rely on both their L1 and L2 cumulated linguistic knowledge when acquiring an additional language. This claim identifies language acquisition in a multilingual context as a cumulative process. The multilingual learner's reliance on the previously acquired linguistic knowledge is restricted to only transfer which has a noticeable rewarding impact in the learning process of the subsequent language. Flynn et al. (2004) argue that the previously acquired languages can positively contribute in the acquisition of subsequent languages. They further claim that transfer of previous linguistic knowledge is possible only when it positively influences the acquisition process of an L3.

The insistence of CEM on the sole beneficial effects of previous linguistic knowledge in the acquisition of an additional language implies a denial of negative transfer from previously acquired languages. Yet literature on second language acquisition attests that previous linguistic knowledge also negatively impacts the acquisition of a new language (Odlin, 1993; Camilleri, 2004; Calvo Cortes, 2005). Sometimes, previously acquired linguistic knowledge impairs the learning of a new language. Such is the case of fossilization which is observed in the TL as a result of negative transfer.

Supporting and reinforcing the claim of CEM, Flynn et al.'s (2004) ascertained that, "Language acquisition has a scaffolding effect" (Rothman, 2010, p.110). This means any previously acquired linguistic knowledge's role is twofold. It can either enhance the acquisition

of any additional language or remain neutral. More importantly, the transfer prediction of previous linguistic knowledge is possible and effective only when the latter has a bootstrapping effect, otherwise transfer is not possible.

While CEM favors a positive contribution of previously acquired languages, it also recognizes some substantial contribution of each language with regard to the perspective of specific language learning resources that each language makes available to the learner. For instance, Flynn et al. (2004) affirm the impact of both L1 and L2 in the process while attesting at the same time that L2 contribution only supersedes that of L1 when, say, structure wise, the syntactic features which are in play are not available in the L1 linguistic system.

Flynn et al.'s (2004), however, worked with Kazakh, Russian, and English as L1, L2, and L3 respectively of which Kazakh was postulated the default language for the subsequent acquisition of Russian and English and typological difference was postulated as the only feature which determined the development patterns. The study investigated the production of restrictive relative clauses in L1 Kazakh/ L2 Russian/ L3 English speakers and it circumscribed the directionality of the head CP in the languages involved. They made the following predictions: if the L1 is the privileged source of transfer and if typological differences are the only developmental patterns, and given that Kazakh and Japanese are similar in terms of head directionality (head-final languages), the acquisition of English as L3 by speakers of Kazakh as L1 should resemble the acquisition of English as L2 by L1 speakers of Japanese. They, however, further hypothesized that L1 Kazakh speakers should present similar acquisition patterns to that of a speaker of Russian as L1 acquiring English as an L2; if the former (Kazakh learner) was acquiring a grammatical system with a new CP as that of Russian as L2.



The findings of the aforementioned study revealed that previous L2 CP development can positively influence the development of CP structure in the acquisition of an additional language. They further concluded that the linguistic knowledge from both L1 and L2 can be used in the acquisition of an additional language.

#### 2.2.2.2. THE L2 STATUS FACTOR

The ‘L2 status factor’ (Bardel and Falk; 2007) is the model which overtly and straightforwardly privileges one of the already acquired languages by exclusively attributing it the status of the sole source of linguistic transfer in the process of multilingual acquisition. The L2 is thus the only linguistic system which imposes its features onto the subsequent language. Bardel et al (2007) claim in their discussing the importance and linguistic benefaction of an L2 in the acquisition process of an L3 that the acquisition of the latter is qualitatively different from those of the previously acquired languages because the linguistic knowledge of L2 plays a substantial role in facilitating the process (see also Hufeisen, 1998; Cenoz and Jessner, 2000; Cenoz, 2001; 2003).

Bardel and Falk’s claim that L2 is the strongest source of transfer in L3 acquisition stems from the findings of their studies (Bardel and Falk, 2007; and Falk and Bardel, 2011). The findings of this study were congruent with the claim that L2 is the strongest source of initial transfer in L3. In their most recent paper, Falk and Bardel (2011), they studied the placement of object pronouns and their findings confirmed the privileged role of L2 in acquiring an L3.

Bardel et al (2007) investigated the issue of syntactic transfer from L2 to L3 in which participants dealt specifically with the placement of negation in the initial state of the acquisition process of both Swedish and Dutch as L3s. Two groups of participants were involved of which

the first had L1 with a V2 structure (German) and the L2 was not (English) while the second group had L1 with non-V2 structure (English) but the L2 was (German). It was observed in most of the selected languages that sentence negation was post-verbal in the matrix clause as both thematic and non-thematic verbs raised to a complementizer head resulting in verb-second (V2) rule.

Four hypotheses were tested and the aim was to see whether: 1. There was no transfer from any previously known language (the non-transfer hypothesis), 2. Properties of the L1 were transferred (the L1 transfer hypothesis), 3. Properties of the L2 were transferred (the L2 transfer hypothesis), 4. Transfer was consistent with the Cumulative Enhancement Model predictions.

The data confirmed the hypothesis 3. The results have shown that L2 Dutch/German group with no V<sub>2</sub> L1 performed better than the L2 English group with V<sub>2</sub>L1 in producing post-verbal negation. Bardel and Falk found that L2 morphosyntactic transfers in the L3 and is also the privileged source of transfer at the L3 initial state. They thus concluded that the L2 status factor is the strongest source of transfer in L3 acquisition.

#### 2.2.2.3. TYPOLOGICAL PRIMACY MODEL (TPM)

The TPM (Rothman; 2010, 2011) supports the contribution of all the previously acquired languages in the initial stage of an L3. TPM stipulates that, “Initial State transfer for multilingualism occurs selectively, depending on the comparative perceived typology of the language pairings involved or psychotypological proximity”. The model argues that typological proximity or psychotypology constrains transfer to the L3. Rothman (2010, 2011) confirms the prevailing role of typological similarity and its role as a crucial variable in the acquisition of an L3.

While TPM seems to lend support to CEM by reconciling its claims that both L1 and L2 provide a viable source of transfer in L3, Rothman (2010) maintains that “this does not always happen in a facilitative fashion”. He, however, reinforces that comparative (psycho) typology always plays a crucial role when relevant. Rothman (2010) argues that the ‘L2 status factor’ can be nullified by “Comparative typological considerations”.

TPM hypothesizes L1 and L2 as the potential source of transfer. But neither of them is identified as a privileged source. TPM predicts that in a pair of previously acquired languages only the one which offers typological proximity with the target language serves as the source of transfer. TPM constrains transfer from two perspectives: the actual typological proximity or the perceived typological proximity which is also called psychotypological proximity existing between the three grammars (Garcia Mayo and Rothman, 2012, p. 19).

Garcia Mayo and Rothman (2012) claim that, “At the initial state upon a limited amount of exposure to the target L3, the TPM proposes that the internal parser assesses relative typological proximity and selects which system should be transferred” (p. 19). The TPM is selective and conditionally non-facilitative. The parser selects the closest system to the TL. The selectivity of one of the competing previously acquired languages may be determined by any syntactic feature such as word order, tense similarity, or any other syntactic similarity depending on the case that is observed at the syntactic level.

Garcia-Mayo (2012) suggests that, “Studies with typologically unrelated languages be carried out in order to tease apart the L2 factor from psychotypological issues” (p.140). The TPM suggests that transfer can be non-facilitative when psychotypology conditions the transfer by matching and misanalysing the underlying syntax of L1 or L2. In order for transfer to occur,

subjects have to make an interlingual identification. They must judge that something such as the syntactic structure in the L1 or L2 is similar to something in the TL. It should however be noted that not only the L1 or the L2 has to present similarity with the TL in order for the transfer to occur. The L3 must also present some linguistic features which invites the (mis-)perception of a similarity. This entails that transfer is triggered by psychotypology constraint. That is, transfer occurs because subjects perceive an L1 or L2 syntactic structure as being similar to a syntactic structure in the TL. Should it be straightly noted that a language syntactic structure is susceptible to transfer only if it is perceived to have a similar counterpart in the recipient language (Jarvis et al., 2010, p. 174).

In the following, I discuss the results of some studies which are relevant to this paper. It discusses the findings of Montrul, Dias, and Santos (2010) and Rothman (2010) whose studies illustrate the application of the TPM with reference to syntactic transfer in third language acquisition.

Montrul, Dias, and Santos (2010) examined the source of transfer and the structural relationship between languages in the acquisition of Brazilian Portuguese (BP). Three language groups were selected of which the first was made up of L1 Spanish, L2 English, and L3 BP. The second group was made up of L1 speakers of English who had Spanish as L2 and were learning BP as L3. Finally, the third group was made up of native speakers of BP. The linguistic phenomenon of interest in the study was the object clitic pronouns and the related properties of clitic placement and object expression. It is observed that English does not show any similarities with BP in terms of object clitic while Spanish does.

The work aimed to determine whether cross-linguistic similarities between Spanish and BP were an important factor in the acquisition of the L3 BP. The paper postulated that if typological similarity plays a role in L3 syntax, Spanish should trigger the transfer; if not no transfer would be observed from English in both group 1 and 2. The results have shown that structural proximity/psychotypology has played a role in the acquisition of the L3. The work also shows that structural proximity may not be the only factor that has influenced syntactic transfer in L3 acquisition.

Rothman (2010) examines the L3 syntactic transfer selectivity and typological determinacy using the Typological Primacy Model. The paper seeks to answer the research questions related to determining the variables which trigger syntactic transfer and to interpret the L3 transfer patterns in relation to mental constitution of linguistic systems. Its objective was threefold. First, it aimed to test the Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM) (Flynn et al., 2004); second, it aimed as well to test the L2 status factor (Bardel and Falk, 2007); finally, it tested the Typological Primacy Model (TPM) (Rothman, 2010).

The paper hypothesizes that late learners, like early learners are able to implicitly access the previously acquired linguistic features and properties of an L1 into any additional language that is being acquired. The work further predicts that any variable that has been attested in early L3 acquisition as the trigger of transfer is likely to do so in the case of late learners. This amounts to confirming that there is no significant difference between early learners acquiring an L3 and late learners.

The hypothesis of the work assumes that either the syntactic transfer into L3 is triggered by typological/psychotypological similarities that exist between the previously acquired languages and the TL or it is the L2 status factor which plays a deterministic role in acquiring the L3.

The paper investigated the syntactic word order and relative clause attachment preference in L3 Brazilian Portuguese (BP) with two groups of participants of which the first was made of Italians who have English as L2 and were learning Spanish as L3 and a group of English natives who have Spanish as L2 and were learning Portuguese. The predictions of the paper were based on the claims of the selected models: Bardel and Falk's L2 Status factor predicted that the order of language acquisition, with transfer coming solely from the L2, would play a great role while Flynn et al.'s CEM ignored the order of acquisition as a deterministic factor; it was predicted that transfer could come from both the L1 and L2. Rothman's TPM, however, anticipated that typological similarity would trigger transfer from Spanish.

The results showed that transfer came from Spanish which was similar to the TL and this irrespective of whether it was the L1 or L2. The implication of the findings was that typological proximity between languages is the most important factor which triggers syntactic transfer.

Findings of this study are congruent with the claims of the Typological Primacy Model since the results of the study show robust evidence that typological proximity is the strongest factor which triggers syntactic transfer in adult L3 acquisition process. Typological proximity among romance languages (Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) prevails over L2 status (English).

### 2.3. IMPLICIT VS EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

Gutierrez (2012) defines implicit knowledge as systematic, intuitive and procedural knowledge that is automatically accessed in fluent performance and that cannot be verbalize (p.

21). It is otherwise called ‘tacit knowing’ which in UG and cognitive science is the internalized rules or principles of a generative grammar that a person possesses and uses to express the knowledge of his/her language. This tacit knowledge is nothing but the implicit knowledge of a language because a speaker with such knowledge is unable to provide a verbal statement of those rules or principles (Davies, 2014).

R. Ellis (1994) defines explicit L2 knowledge as, “Knowledge of rules and items that exist in an analyzed form so that learners are able to report what they know” (p. 702). Explicit knowledge is declarative knowledge and it can be described as knowledge of ‘knowing what’. Declarative knowledge is knowledge of factual information and it can be described in terms of rules by using metalingual language.

Explicit knowledge is usually learned in a formal context such as a school or a language center and it requires conscious process to be learned. This type of knowledge is not gained through natural exposure to the target language as that is observed in the case of implicit knowledge.

The difference between implicit and explicit knowledge is elucidated through a number of features. Implicit knowledge is characterized and thus identified as unconscious, natural, slow, described as ‘knowing how’, and it is based on communication or language use. It is based on intuitive awareness of linguistic norms and is potentially learned within the critical period. Explicit knowledge, however, is conscious, artificial, fast, based on form, and could be described as ‘knowing what’ (Clark, 2010). Explicit knowledge is learned through explicit instruction and is mostly explicitly rule-based. The results and output of explicitly learned linguistic knowledge

most often show limitations in terms of L2 adult attainment when their performance is compared to native speaker norms (N. Ellis, 2005, p.1).

My interest in implicit vs explicit knowledge stems from the concern of determining whether learners are more accurate when they rely on their explicit knowledge than when they do so in their implicit knowledge. The other concern is to determine whether implicit or explicit knowledge motivate and constrain transfer in L3 acquisition. The review of the existing literature on implicit vs explicit knowledge and language transfer is quite informative.

Odlin (1989) argued that explicit knowledge has an effect on transfer that is observed in a person's language use. He further argued that linguistic awareness plays a nonstructural factor with cross-linguistic influences. Odlin (1989) found that explicit knowledge and conscious monitoring obscure the occurrence of transfer. Jarvis (2010) found that learners are more accurate when they are consciously monitoring language use but inaccurate when not monitoring. This finding was suggested in the whereby a subject had to use the English definite article which was correctly used in explicit mode but incorrectly used in implicit mode. Jarvis's study implied that, "The learner exhibited transfer when relying on implicit knowledge but not when relying on explicit knowledge of English" (Jarvis et al. 2010, p. 195).

Kasper (1992) argued that explicit knowledge of the pragmatic norms of the TL obliterates negative transfer while Jarvis (2003) was able to show that negative transfer from L2 English to L1 Finnish was minimized in tasks that required reliance on explicit knowledge than in tasks promoting reliance on implicit knowledge. These findings imply that negative transfer is less likely to occur when participants resort to explicit knowledge while using the TL (Odlin, 1989, p. 152). Leung and Williams (2013), however, investigated the effects of prior linguistic knowledge



on implicit language learning. The paper purported to test whether animacy may be implicitly mapped onto article by native speakers of English and Chinese. Their findings showed that implicit language learning is sensitive to previously acquired linguistic knowledge.

Most laboratory studies that aimed to compare the results of implicit and explicit learning conditions and studies comparing explicit and implicit learning in the context of classroom were in favor of explicit learning which showed more advantage for explicit learning (Schmidt, 2001, 1995; Leow, 1998; Robinson, 1997; Scott, 1998, 1990; Von Elek and Oskarsson 1973). Time pressure has often been used as a variable to determine the use by learners of explicit and or implicit knowledge. It is documented that time pressure makes the use of explicit knowledge difficult (Dekeyser, 2001).

Taking up from the findings of previously aforementioned studies, it is indicated that the comparison of explicit and implicit learning in the context of classroom revealed an advantage for explicit learning over implicit learning. However, Leung and Williams (2013) study suggested that, “Cross-linguistic influences may take place implicitly” (p.2871). This study purports to determine whether subjects are more accurate when communicating in explicit mode than in implicit mode. It further aims to determine whether subjects make less transfer errors in task that promotes reliance on explicit knowledge than they do in task that promotes reliance on implicit knowledge. Answers to these concerns will shed light on the issue.

## 2.4. THE LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON

This section discusses and contrasts the use of the past tense, *passé composé*, and the present perfect tense in the three aforementioned languages; provided they exist in the language. The simple past exists in French, English, and Lingala while the form, “Aux (have/avoir) + past

participle” exists only; form wise, in both French and English. In the following, I am going to contrast both the form and function of the present perfect, passé composé, and the simple past tense in English, French and Lingala. Then, a synopsis table will present the tense differences in the three languages.

## 1. French

The simple past tense (passé simple in French) is also called preterit. It is mostly used in written narrative of a classical style. It is no longer used in spoken French; it is called literary or historical tense because it is used in written French. Batchelor and Offord (1982) say that, “Past historic is used in writing, especially novels, students’ essays, fairy stories, etc.” They further argue that past historic is used, “sometimes in newspapers; talks on radio and television dealing with historical topics; formal speeches, lectures” (p. 233). Batchelor and Offord (1982) note that the present perfect is, “The normal tense used in all registers when referring to a past event while the past historic is restricted to R3 usage” (p.232). ‘R’ stands for ‘register’; and Batchelor & Offord (1982) discuss three types of registers in which ‘R1’ is characterized by very informal, casual, colloquial, and familiar speech; ‘R2’ refers to “standard, polite, educated, equivalent of ‘BBC English...’”; while ‘R3’ is “formal, literary, official, with archaic ring, language of scholars and purists, meticulously correct, reluctant to admit new terms” (p.6).

Passé composé is the most commonly used French past tense to talk about a past completed event. The passé composé is used to talk about an action completed in the past as in 1.

### Example 1: The Passé composé in French

<b>French:</b>	Tu	As	Joué	Au	football	le	samedi	passé
<b>Gloss:</b>	You	Have	Played	At	soccer	the	Saturday	Past
<b>English:</b>	You played soccer last Saturday.							

Unlike in 1 in which the ‘passé composé’ illustrates the use of a completed past event, in 2 however, the passé composé is also used to express an action that was repeated a number of times and completed in the past.

**Example 2:** The Passé composé in French

**French:** J’ ai joué au Football trois fois le samedi passé

**Gloss:** I have played at Soccer three times the Saturday past

**English:** I played soccer three times last Saturday.

The passé composé is also commonly used to express a series of actions which were completed in the past.

**Example 3:** The Passé composé in French

**French:** Samedi, Il a vu sa mère a parlé

**Gloss:** Saturday he has seen his mother has spoken

**French:** au medecin et a trouvé un chat

**Gloss:** at doctor and at found a cat

**English:** Saturday he saw his mother, talked to the doctor, and found a cat.

The ‘passé composé’ in French is made up of the auxiliary “avoir” (have) plus the past participle. The auxiliary “avoir” is unmarked/the default. However, the “passé composé” requires the auxiliary “être” (to be) with a dozen of intransitive verbs such as devenir ‘to become’, arriver ‘to arrive’, aller ‘to go’, and tomber ‘to fall’, to name but a few (Rowlett, 2007, p. 40).

**Example 4:** The Unmarked case of the Passé Composé

**French:** Eros a Mange du pain hier

**Gloss:** Eros has eaten/Past Participle of bread yesterday

**English:** Eros ate bread yesterday.

**Example 5:** The marked case of the Passé Composé

<b>French:</b>	Mimie	est	Arrivée	à	Paris	hier
<b>Gloss:</b>	Mimie	Is	arrived	to	Paris	yesterday
<b>English:</b>	Mimie arrived in Paris yesterday.					

## 2. Lingala

In Lingala, different past tense forms are used to express a past and completed event depending on the temporal setting in the past. The remote past is used for an event that took place in the remote time in the past while the recent past is used to express an event which took place recently in the past.

### Example 6:

#### 6.a. The Simple Past (recent past) in Lingala

<b>Lingala:</b>	Joe	a-	-kumb-	-ákí	mutuka	lobi
<b>Gloss:</b>	Joe	1psSPP	Drive	recent pst	car	yesterday
<b>English:</b>	Joe drove a car yesterday.					

#### 6.b. The Simple Past (remote past) in Lingala

<b>Lingala:</b>	Joe	a-	-bongis-	-áká	mutuka	na	1996
<b>Gloss:</b>	Joe	3psSPP	Fix	remote pst	car	and	1996
<b>English:</b>	Joe fixed a car in 1996.						

It should however be specified that the appreciation of an event as being remote or recent is not always clear cut in Lingala spoken in Kinshasa. This is the reason why some people use the two forms interchangeably. Five years would be considered as sufficiently remote in the past.

Immediate past would refer to an event which took place sometime in the past today.

### Example 7: Immediate Past in Lingala

<b>Lingala:</b>	Joe	a-	-somb-	-i	mbisi	lelo na tongo
<b>Gloss:</b>	Joe	3psSPP	buy	Im.pst	fish	today morning
<b>English:</b>	Joe bought fish today morning.					

Guthrie and Corrington (1988) discussing tenses in Lingala label seven of them of which the present perfect tense is not labeled. Likewise, Bokamba (1976) discusses eight tenses in Lingala with no mention of any tense that could express the idea of past until now as the present perfect tense does it in English. The list could be elongated to Kambou's (1998) and a few Bantuists who ascertain the absence of this tense in Lingala. Some authors, however, present the approximate equivalent of the present perfect tense in Lingala when they have to translate from English into Lingala.

### 3. English

In English, there is one form to express an event which took place and was completed in the past. This is the simple past tense.

#### **Example 8:** The Simple Past Tense in English

**English:** Joe Went home last week

English uses the present perfect tense to talk about an event which took place in the past but which has some implications in the present. Three main uses of the present perfect tense in English which refer to talking about experience, change, and continuing situation are discussed here.

- **Present perfect tense for experience**

The present perfect tense is used to express an experience from the past of which no interest is shown in when the experience took place.

#### **Example 9:** The present perfect tense in English

**English:** Bob has lived in Kinshasa.

In 12, the event took place in the past and now I have a memory of the event.

- **Present perfect tense for change**

The present perfect tense is also used to talk about a change or new information.

**Example 10:** The present perfect tense in English

**English:** Philo has bought a house.

When the present perfect tense is used in this context, the past situation is always in opposition with the present situation.

- **Present perfect tense for continuing situation**

The present perfect tense is used to talk about a continuing situation related to a state that started in the past and that continues in the present and might continue in the future. Usually, for or since is used with the present perfect tense in this context.

**Example 11:** The present perfect tense in English

**English:** I have lived here since 2003.

The following discussion contrasts the use of the aforementioned tenses in the three languages. The simple past exists in French, English, and Lingala while the form, "Aux (have/avoir) + past participle" exists only; form wise, in both French and English. In the following, I am going to contrast both the form and use of present perfect and simple past tense in English, French and Lingala. Then, a synopsis table will present the tense differences in the three languages.

The present perfect tense in English is made up of the auxiliary “have” plus the past participle. This tense is similar in form to “passé composé” in French which is also made up of the auxiliary “avoir” (have) plus the past participle. The present perfect and the “passé composé” tenses present the same formal paradigm but differ in terms of use. The present perfect tense is always used in English to talk about an event which took place in the past but which has some implications in the present.

At this point, I can claim that the English present perfect tense is similar to French “passé composé” with respect to form but it does not exist in Lingala. Therefore, different tenses will be used to express the same idea but in a different language. For instance, in English, the present perfect tense is used with expressions like ‘the first time’, ‘the second time’ etc., while in French and Lingala the present and the immediate past are respectively used as in (15).

### **Example 12:**

#### **12.a. English Present Perfect Tense**

**English:** This is the first time that I have bought this food.

#### **12.b. French Simple Present Tense**

<b>French:</b>	C’	est	la	première	fois	que	j’	achete	cette	nourriture
<b>Gloss:</b>	It	is	the	first	time	that	I	buy	this	food

#### **12.c Lingala recent past**

<b>Lingala:</b>	E-	-zal-	-i	Mbala	Liboso	na-	-somb-	-i	bilei	oyo
<b>Gloss:</b>	It	be	SPr	Time	First	1ps.SPP	buy	Im.Pst	food	this

**English:** It is the first time that I have bought this food.

#### **12.d. Lingala subjunctive**

**Lingala:** E- -za- Ø Mbala Liboso na- -somb- -a biloko oyo  
**Gloss:** It be SPr Time First 1ps.SPP buy things these  
**English:** It is the first time that I have bought this food.

The simple past tense is used In English to talk about events which took place in the past and when the time period is completed. In French and Lingala the “passé composé” and the past are respectively used. In Lingala, an appropriate past tense form needs to be selected depending on whether the event was completed in the recent past or in the distant past. Example 16 illustrates the issue.

### Example 13:

#### 13.a. English simple past

**English:** Joe bought a car last year.

#### 13.b. French passé composé

**French:** Joe a acheté Une voiture l' année passé  
**Gloss:** Joe has bought A car the year past  
**English:** Joe bought a car last year.

#### 13.c. Lingala recent past

**Lingala:** Joe a- somb- Aki mutuka mbula eleki  
**Gloss:** Joe 3psSPP Buy recent pst car year past  
**English:** Joe bought a car last year.

The present perfect tense is used with adverbs such as ‘ever’, ‘never’, ‘already’, ‘so far’, etc., in English while the “passé composé” is used with the same adverbs in French. In Lingala, however, the subjunctive is used with those adverbs: ‘osi’ (ever), ‘nanu’ (never), ‘nasi’ (already),

### Example 14: ‘ever’



#### 14.a. English present perfect tense

**English:** Have you ever eaten fumbua?

#### 14.b. French passé composé

**French:** Avez - Vous déjà mange du fumbua?  
**Gloss:** Have You already eaten of oha leaves?  
**English:** Have you ever eaten fumbua?

#### 14.c. Lingala subjunctive

**Lingala:** O- -si o- -li- -a fumbua ?  
**Gloss:** 2psSPP already 2psSPP Aat subj. oha leaves ?  
**English:** Have you ever eaten oha leaves?

**Example: 15** ‘Never’

#### 15.a. English present perfect tense

**English:** I have never eaten oha leaves.

#### 15.b. French Present Perfect Tense

**French:** Je n’ Ai Jamais Mange du fumbua.  
**Gloss:** I Neg. Has Never Eaten of oha leaves  
**English:** I have never eaten fumbua.

#### 15.c. Lingala subjunctive

**Lingala:** Na- -nu na- -li- -a Fumbua te  
**Gloss:** 1psSPP never 1psSPP Eat Subj. oha leaves Neg.  
**English:** I have never eaten oha leaves.

**Example 16:** ‘Already’

#### 16.a. English Present Perfect Tense

**English:** I have already watched this movie.

### 16.b. French Passé composé

**French:** J' ai déjà suivi ce filme.  
**Gloss:** I have already follow this movie.  
**English:** I have already watched this movie.

### 16.c. Lingala Immediate past

**Lingala:** Na- -si na- -tal- -i filme oyo.  
**Gloss:** 1psSPP already 1psSPP look ImPst movie this.  
**English:** I have already watched this movie.

This synopsis table summarizes tenses in these different languages

**Table 1:** Past event that was completed in the past

For an event which happened in the past and was completed in the past		
English	French	Lingala
Simple Past Tense	Passé compose	-Remote past/simple past(-áká) -Recent past (-aki)
Examples		
Andy went to Paris last month.	Andy est parti à Paris le mois passé. (Andy went to Paris last month)	Andy akendaki na Paris sanza eleki. (Andy went to Paris last month) Andy akendaki na Paris sanza eleki.(Andy went to Paris last month)

The present perfect tense used with a (frequency) adverb very often overlaps with the passé composé in French and this entails that whenever the passé composé is used with a (frequency) adverb, its counterpart in English would be the present perfect tense. However, for the sake of this study, the case of present perfect + an adverb is discarded because it constitutes a perfect match in prediction which would bring no novel information in the study. Also, it requires some advanced knowledge of the TL since besides knowing the appropriate use of the tense, adverbs

use with the present perfect tense require knowledge of the appropriate position within a verb phrase. Combining the use of the present perfect tense with the appropriate position of the adverb in a sentence would render the task very complex.

In this paper, my attention is, first focused on case number one whereby the simple past is used in English while the ‘Passé composé’ and recent past (and depending on the case, remote past) are used in French and Lingala respectively to talk about an event which took place in the past and was completed in the past. The linguistic phenomenon which is the focus of the predictions in this study informs us that both the ‘present perfect tense’ in English and the ‘passé composé’ in French present form similarities in terms of their syntactic structure which is “the auxiliary have + the past participle”. However, both tenses diverge in terms of their use. With respect to the scope of investigation of this study which is restricted to the use of the simple past and the present perfect tense in English, the ‘passé composé’ in French is used to express an event which took place in the past and which was completed in the past while the ‘present perfect tense’ in English is used to express an event which took place in the past but which have some implications in the present time.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE PREDICTIONS

In the light of the literature review and the factors which motivate transfer from a previously acquired language to an additional language, this study will answer a number of questions which challenge my understanding of the topic. The challenge was raised not only by the findings of some recent works which have addressed the issue of cross-linguistic influence but also by the factors which were put forward as the triggers to the transfer.

Like English, Lingala has the past tenses (remote and recent past) which are used to talk about a past, completed action. The simple past tenses in both English and Lingala are used to talk about a past, completed action while in French the *passé compose* is used instead. In light of these decisive factors, closeness between the L1 Lingala and L3 English ( in form) but difference in ‘form’ between the L2 (*passé compose*) and L3(simple past), the work seeks to answer the following questions: Which previously acquired language between the L1, L2, or both L1 & L2 takes precedence in L3 syntactic transfer? Is the L2 the privileged source of syntactic transfer even when the L1 offers some syntactic similarities with the L3? Answers to these concerns will shed light to my study. The predictions in this paper are organized as follows:

**Table 2:** Predictions of the study

CONTEXT	TRANSFER FROM L1	TRANSFER FROM L2	TRANSFER FROM L1& L2	ENGLISH
Past completed Event	Simple Past ( <i>TPM</i> )	Present Perfect ( <i>L2 status factor</i> )	Simple Past ( <i>CEM</i> )	Simple Past

The most relevant and plausible predictions concerning the source of transfer in relation to the three tested models which synoptically capture the realities depicted on the aforementioned table 3 are summarized as follows:

Should it first be recalled that subjects determined the similarity between prior linguistic knowledge and the TL through the syntactic forms of the verb? Subjects perceived the form of the “remote/recent past” in Lingala which is made up of “verb stem+ simple past tense inflectional morpheme” as similar to the form of the simple past tense in English which is also made up of “verb stem+ simple past tense inflectional morpheme”. It is this similarity in terms of form of the inflected simple past verb which triggers transfer. Subjects establish a mental association between the ‘remote/recent past’ and the simple past tense and they formulate their hypothesis assuming that the form of the simple past tense which is the mental association of the ‘remote/recent past’ is the appropriate verb form to use in order to express a past completed event in English.

Based on the TPM which claims that only the language with syntactic proximity with the TL serves as the source of transfer, the study posits that if subjects are tapping their linguistic knowledge from the L1 to talk about a past completed event in English they will use the simple past tense. This tense choice will be triggered by the local syntactic similarity in terms of form between the simple past in English and the remote/ recent past in Lingala in the context of a past completed event.

Transfer occurs because subjects make an interlingual identification; they perceive and judge that the form of the syntactic structure of the remote/recent past in Lingala is similar to the form of the syntactic structure of the simple past tense in English. It is also the form of the syntactic structure of the simple past in English which has invited the perception of the similarity between

the forms of the sentences in both languages. Transfer is triggered by the psychotypological constraint which enables subjects to perceive similarity between the two tenses. This similarity is observed at the level of form of the tenses. It is hence clear that the syntactic structure of a previously acquired language is susceptible to transfer as Jarvis (2010) puts it, “only if it is perceived to have a similar counterpart in the recipient language” (p.174). The perception of the similarity is not only observed on the surface level but subjects’ perception of the similarity at the psychological level plays also a role for transfer to occur.

With reference to the “L2-status factor” model which claims that the L2 is the strongest source of transfer in L3 acquisition and that the L2 blocks any syntactic transfer from the L1 syntactic system, the study posits that if subjects are tapping their linguistic knowledge from the L2 to talk about a past completed event in English they will use the present perfect tense.

Based on the CEM which claims that learners rely on their cumulated linguistic knowledge from both L1 and L2 as source of transfer and that transfer is only positive or null; the study posits that if subjects are tapping their linguistic knowledge from both L1 and L2 to talk about a past completed event in English they will use the simple past tense.

Referring to the concern of determining whether subjects are more accurate in implicit knowledge than in explicit, the study posits that if subjects are more accurate in implicit knowledge than in explicit, they will make fewer errors in the interview than in the written elicitation task. However, if subjects are more accurate in explicit knowledge than in implicit, they will make fewer errors in the written elicitation task than in the interview.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. SUBJECTS**

Twenty-five adult subjects were considered for this study. They are adult Congolese immigrants who live in the USA. They came in the USA through Diversity lottery which granted them the green card. The average age when they started to be exposed to English is 15 years old and their average length of residence in the USA is 3 years. Most of them acquired French through instructional exposure at school and their average length of exposure through formal instruction in French is 4 years.

They are all native speakers of Lingala who acquired it naturally at home from their home exposure to the language and through everyday interaction with the members of their respective communities as they were growing up in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All of them come from Kinshasa where Lingala is widely spoken as a lingua-franca. They all have at least a high school state diploma from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

All the subjects grew up in Kinshasa and attended school in the same setting. French was used as an official language and as the language of instruction from primary school upward. They also studied French as a school subject whereby emphasis was made on the grammar of French. English was exclusively learned as a school subject. Subjects started taking English from third form of high school up to sixth form. However, English was heavily taught structurally. Little attention was paid to other language basic skills. Therefore, students completed the high school program with very poor speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills.

The subjects are learning English in the USA through exposure at the working place setting. Besides, they also attend some English courses which are freely offered at some churches in Champaign or Urbana. Some others take those English classes at Park Land College for the sake of improving their English. Those classes are offered in a formal way where all the basic language skills are targeted. Besides the formal setting, subjects are in English-immersion environment which tremendously reinforces their learning and exposure to the target language.

Most of them work at factories in Urbana-Champaign and express the necessity of learning English in order for them to be able to communicate at the workplace. They also express their interest to speak English in order to fully integrate their new American community. Still, their rate of use of English on a daily basis is still very low because they tend to associate with other Congolese who only speak Lingala whenever they meet.

It should be noted that most subjects use Lingala as a means of socialization and social communication which makes Lingala the dominant language and identify them as legitimate native speakers of Lingala but as L2 speakers of French. Even though some of the subjects were exposed to French at an earlier age as indicated in table 3, the exposure was not enough to pretend that they are native speakers of French. They were exposed to French through pre-school program whereby the pre-school activities consisted in singing and playing. Some of the school would use both French and Lingala as language of instruction. The daily and weekly exposure was for respectively two hours a day and five days a week which would amount to 10 hours a week of which the exposure to French was not for all hours. That is, French was used at school for some kid school activities such as songs, recitals, and short poems which were learnt by rote. However, in some other cases, Lingala could also be used when needed and depending on the pre-school.



I would argue, lending support to Benmamoun, Montrul, and Polinsky (2010) that the “mere exposure to a language during the critical period is not enough to acquire native competence” (p.2). They (2010) go on stating that the quality and quantity of exposure tremendously matter in the acquisition and attainment of native proficiency in any language. This is the case with the subjects of this study whose exposure to French has not been either of good quality or of enough quantity since their early age. They were exposed to French spoken by non-native speakers who did not have native or native-like proficiency in French. This early exposure make them sound like different from other L2 adult learners even if this early exposure did not promote the acquisition of French at that earlier stage. With reference to what is discussed above, it could be noted that the subjects of this study did have incomplete acquisition of French which was due to insufficient language input during childhood as well as during their learning at school. In the context of this study, it could be said that most of the subjects did not have an optimal and continuous exposure to French. They most often had fewer opportunities to use and socially interact in French as their language history indicates it. On the other hand, learners have also very limited opportunities to use French once they are out of school context. This happens because Lingala is the language of socialization and social interaction in the street and different public places and language of communication in families. This state of affairs have further limited their chance to use French and thus justifies the reason why subjects do not have native or native-like proficiency in French as they stated it in their language self-rating forms. It should thus be noted that the subjects of this study are Native speakers of Lingala but L2 speakers of French who are learning English.

The control group was made up of 5 American native speakers of English. All of them grew up in the USA and have English as their native language which they grew up speaking. They all

had at least a high school degree and had taken at least a foreign language at school. Two of them are graduate students in a master program; two are employed, while one is an undergrad student. All of them mentioned that English is the only language they speak. The table below provides subjects' information in a synoptic way.

**Table 3:** Subjects' information

Subject's number	Education	Length of Stay in the USA	Most spoken language	Least spoken language	Home language	Age of acquisition		Languages spoken in the USA	
						French	English	At work place	With Friends
1	HSD	5 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	5y	27y	Engl	Ling
2	SC	4 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	1y	12y	Engl	Fre, Ling
3	College	2 y	Ling	Engl	Ling., Fre, Cil	1y	12y	Engl	Fre, Ling
4	College	2y4m	Ling, Fren	Engl	Ling, Fre., Cil	6y	12y	Engl, Fre	Fre, Ling
5	College	2 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	5y	13y	Engl	Ling, Fre
6	College	8 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	6y	26y	Engl, Fre	Engl, Fre, Ling
7	College	3 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	2y	13y	Engl	Fre
8	College	2 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	5y	15y	Engl	Fre
9	College	8 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	1y	16y	Engl	Ling, Fre, Engl
10	College	8 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	1y	12y	Engl	Ling, Fre
11	College	13 y	Engl, Ling	Fre	Ling, Fre	2y	14y	Engl	Engl, Ling
12	HSD	10 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	6y	25y	Engl	Ling, Fre
13	College	2y3m	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	6y	15y	Engl, Ling, Fre	Engl, Ling, Fre
14	College	2y8m	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	5y	13y	Engl	Ling
15	Some college	4y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	6y	13y	Engl	Ling, Fre, Engl
16	HSD	10 y	Engl, Ling	Fre	Ling, Fre	5y	16y	Engl	Engl, Ling
17	College	4 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	4y	27y	Engl	Ling
18	College	2 y	Fre, Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	1y	15y	Engl	Ling, Fre
19	College	2y8m	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	3y	13y	Engl	Ling, Fre

**Table 3:** Subjects' information (cont.)

20	Some college	8 y	Fre, Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	2y	13y	Engl	Ling, Fre
21	College	12 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	3y	12y	Engl	Ling, Fre
22	College	3 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	3y	13y	Ling, Fre, Engl	Ling
23	College	7 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	3y	15y	Engl	Fre, Ling
24	College	4 y	Ling	Engl	Ling, Fre	5y	11y	Engl' Ling	Ling
25	HSD	2 y	Ling, Fre	Engl	Ling, Fre	8y	12y	Engl	Ling, Fre, Engl

In the table above, 'HSD' stands for 'High School Diploma', 'y' for year, 'Ling' for Lingala, 'Fre.' for French and 'Engl.' for English, 'Cil.' for Ciluba while 'm' stands for 'month'. It should be noted that most of the subjects who acquired French at the earlier age were exposed to the language at pre-K school (pre-kindergarten school) whereby most activities are song-based and game-like. The exposure is limited to 3 hours a day and 5 days a week.

#### 4.2. TASKS AND PROCEDURE

Three tasks were administered to the subjects of this study. They ranged from the interview, written elicitation task, to the cloze test. All the tasks were administered in their order of occurrence. Both the interview and the written elicitation task were administered in order to elicit data via both implicit and explicit mode. The aim was to determine whether time pressure as a variable could have any incidence on determining whether transfer effects would be evident when subjects are put in both implicit and explicit conditions. It further aimed to determine the degree of accuracy in relation to the information subjects have provided when put in either implicit (interview) or explicit mode (written elicitation task).

The interview promoted reliance on implicit knowledge because subjects had limited time to answer the questions or were put under time pressure and it was in oral form. However, the

written elicitation task promoted reliance on explicit knowledge because subjects were allowed enough time to answer the questions and because the task was in written form.

I interviewed the subjects in English and time was allowed to speak as much as they wished to before the next question could be asked. Then, the written elicitation task was administered. Subjects filled in the blanks with the verbs in parentheses in the tense that was suggested by the time adverbial clue that the sentence contained. Subjects had plenty of time to work on the task and no restriction in terms of time was imposed on them. Finally, subjects took the cloze test. The latter consisted in choosing the right option out of the three which were suggested in the blanks. It should be mentioned that native speakers of American English did not take the cloze test because the same cloze test was previously administered in another study by Ionin and Montrul (2010) and the native speakers performed at ceiling.

#### 4.3. PROFICIENCY TEST

A cloze test was used to determine subjects' level of proficiency in English. This cloze test was used by Ionin and Montrul (2010). It was an adaptation from American Kernel Lessons which was drawn from the Advanced Students' Book by O'Neil and Washburn (1981). The test was made up of forty blanks with three options each of which subjects had to choose one correct answer.

Beside the cloze test, subjects were also asked to self-assess their proficiency level in both French and English. They were provided with a form in which they had to choose one of the options which read as beginner, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advance, native-like fluency, and native fluency. The self-assessment results were intended to be compared with the

close test. It was finally the cloze test results which helped categorize subjects into three major categories. The interview was not at all used to determine the proficiency.

Subjects whose scores varied from 18 to 24 out of 40 were placed in beginning level. Those whose scores varied from 25 to 29 were categorized as intermediate; and finally those who scored from 30 to 37 were considered as advanced. Three categories emerged from the results of which 9 subjects were in the beginner level, 9 others were in the intermediate while 7 subjects were categorized in the advanced level. The mean score on the cloze test was 26.4.

#### 4.4. SUBJECTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING HISTORY

Subjects were required to fill in a background questionnaire which addressed their language learning background. The questionnaire identified both their country of origin and country of residency. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections of which the linguistic background constituted seventy-five percent of the questions. The other first two sections were on the personal data and family history related to the subject. The questions were specific and they sought to elicit information related to the subject's level of education, length of stay in Urbana-Champaign, the language(s) subject grew up speaking at home, with friends, and at school, and the language s/he speaks the most and or the least on a daily basis.

The linguistic history section dealt only with linguistic information. It aimed to elicit information such as the age at which a subject started learning English and or French; to know whether French was spoken alongside with Lingala at home; and the language parents spoke at home. It also elicited information on the language(s) one's siblings and relatives used when communicating with the subject and the predominant language the subject uses at home here in the USA. Subjects were also asked to specify the language they use when they are at the

workplace and the language they use with friends once they are outside workplace. Finally, subjects were asked to say if they learned English at school and at which frequency on a weekly basis. They had also to say the length each lesson lasted.

#### 4.5. INSTRUMENTS

The paper is based on data which have been collected from experiments. As to the laboratory data collecting type of instrument, an interview was conducted in order to collect part of the data of this study. The interview was conducted in form of story-telling whereby participants were provided with questions that requested them to tell their life-story experience to the interviewer.

The interview was related to past completed event. It aimed to elicit verb tense forms in the simple past (questions 1 and 3). The future (question 4) was used as a distractor in the study. The questions aimed to trigger a specific verb tense in the speech production of each subject. The simple past category had two questions while the future category had only one question. The question related to the future was a distractor. For the sake of this study, after analysis of the questions, only questions 1 and 3 were reported. Data related to question 2 will be incorporated in the larger project which is related to this study. Question 4 was not reported because it was a distractor. The following are the interview questions:

1. Tell me about something that you remember from your life in Congo.
2. Tell me about your two big accomplishments in the last six months.
3. Tell me about your first arrival in the USA.
4. Tell me about something that you would like to do in six months.

In addition, subjects had to do the written elicitation task. The task had 24 questions. The task was organized into a category of six items. The targeted category was the simple past tense

and the present perfect tense; the future, the simple present and the present progressive were distractors. In this study, only the category of items that are related to the use of the simple past tense are reported and data related to the use of the present perfect tense will be reported in the other parts of the whole projects.

The abbreviation used with each token at the end indicates its category. The simple past is represented by ‘SP’, while distractors are represented by ‘D’. The tenses to use in the task were suggested by the specific time adverbial cues which were provided in each sentence. The simple past tense time adverbial cues were ‘last month, 10 years ago, last year, yesterday, in 2011, and last week’. Here are some sample questions that are arranged by category:

**Table 4:** Sample questions for the written elicitation task

Category	Fill in the blanks with the verb provided in the parentheses; use the correct form of the verb.
<b>Past completed event</b>	1. Joe.....a car 10 years ago (buy).
	2. Allegresse.....in Champaign in 2012 (arrive).
<b>Filler</b>	3. Passy.....food now (cook).
	4. Betty.....home next week (go).

The whole test instrument is included in the appendix.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, THE RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

#### **5.1. DATA ANALYSIS**

The data of the study were analyzed in terms of subject's proficiency categories. That is, data were categorized and analyzed with reference to subjects' level of proficiency. Thus we have analysis of data belonging to beginners, intermediate and advanced subjects. And then data were analyzed as a whole reflecting the cumulative frequency and percent for each item.

The analysis of data was further twofold: I started by analyzing answers to the questions of the interview and then the written elicitation task was looked at. Starting with the interview questions, the answers were transcribed in script. Each question script was analyzed separately. For instance, questions 1 and 3 of the interview whereby the simple past tense was expected to be used as the correct tense, the contexts of use were considered to determine how many cases in the script a subject was supposed to use the simple past tense as an obligatory tense. And then, it is only in the identified obligatory contexts that the used finite verbs were counted to determine their frequency. The same logic was applied in question 2 when the simple past tense was produced in the obligatory simple past context; question 4 which was a distractor dealing with the future time was not subject to analysis. Finally, their frequency was expressed in terms of percent.

Three coders used their expertise in determining the obligatory contexts in which the simple past tense had to be used. I was the first coder. Then, two other coders who were native speakers of English were asked to contribute with their expertise. The native speakers were both teachers of English and have been trained as teachers of English as a second language. The coding was



first done separately. And then, all the three coders had to come together to discuss some minor differences which were observed.

It was decided that word by word repetition should be counted only once. Any linguistic form with the correct verb tense but faulty subject-verb agreement was considered correct. In cases where the simple past was the obligatory context and the verb was used in progressive, although the auxiliary ‘be’ bore the correct past tense marker and the main verb bore or failed to bear the –ing inflection, the verb form was considered incorrect since the verb encoded the past progressive rather than the simple past tense. In the case a subject used the emphatic form with did to talk about the past rather than inflecting the main verb with the appropriate past tense marker, the verb form was considered correct. Specific cases such as spelling mistakes as with the verb to buy which was spelled ‘bough’ without a ‘-t’ was considered correct. Also, the use of an –ed past tense inflectional morpheme in lieu of the irregular simple past tense form of the verb was not considered as a mistake. This illustration below shows how the three coders agreed on the script of the two tasks.

For instance, let consider the interview question 2 from subject 2 which is related to past completed event. All the obligatory contexts are between brackets; in this specific instance the past tense was the obligatory tense. The correct verb tense is presented in **bold** while the incorrect verb tense is in **bold, italic**, and underlined as in context 8 below.

**Question: Tell me about your first arrival in the USA?**

[My first time **came** in the United states]<sub>1</sub> [I **was** homesick]<sub>2</sub> and [every time I **was talking** to my parents]<sub>3</sub> [after that I **was crying**]<sub>4</sub> [because I **was miss** them]<sub>5</sub> [that that **was**]<sub>6</sub> [that **was**]<sub>7</sub> [when I **come** in united states]<sub>8</sub>

In this example, there were 8 obligatory contexts in which the simple past had to be used. However, context 7 was not considered because it was a case of repetition of context 6. Thus,

coders agreed not to count the same and exact repetition twice. This reduced the number of obligatory contexts to 7 in this specific case. Contexts 3, 4, and 5 were considered incorrect use of the simple past because the subject failed to use the simple past tense; instead he used the past progressive in 3 and 4 but an uncertain form in 5. In context 8, the subject used the simple present tense rather than the simple past failing to use the correct tense in the obligatory context. The computing of the result of this particular question with this particular subject was done as follows. N which stands for the total number of obligatory contexts was 7. 'f' stands for the frequency of use; for the simple past tense the frequency was 3 here and for the simple present tense it was 1 and the past progressive 3; The past progressive was categorized as 'other verbal forms' as there were 4 categories: the simple past, the present perfect, the simple present tense, and all the rest of verb tenses were 'Other verbal forms'. "Other verbal forms" stands for any verb tense which was not predicted in a specific context of use in the task. In this specific case, all the raters had:

**Simple past tense:** f= 3; %= 42.8

**Present perfect tense:** f= 0; %= 0

**Simple present tense:** f= 1; %= 14.2

**Other verbal forms:** f= 3; %= 42.8

The raters' task consisted in only identifying the frequency of tense use in the obligatory contexts. I had to compute the percentage later on.

The same coding system was applied to the written elicitation task in which the same categories and coding criteria were applied. For instance, agreeing upon verb agreement and or verb inflectional morpheme, when a subject used the verb form such as in 'Bob have visited London several times' this form was rated as correct because the verb tense was correct even if

the subject failed to properly inflect the auxiliary to the third form singular. As of subject – verb agreement, the case was not counted as faulty. For instance, a verb form such as ‘We was happy there’ rather than ‘we were happy there’ was not considered faulty. All the raters agreed to count such forms as correct because they reflected the correct use of the simple past even if the agreement failed to apply.

Let illustrate “Other verbal forms” in the context of written elicitation task; in the context whereby the use of the simple past was obligatory and where it was predicted that L1 would use the simple past and L2 the present perfect if they were transferring from those respective languages, any other verb tense or linguistic item that was different from the target or the predicted tenses were categorized as ‘Other verbal forms’. For example, beginner subject number 14 responded as follows to this sentence: “Joe *was buy* a car 10 years ago”. This linguistic form was categorized as ‘Other verbal forms’. Each column is further divided into two: frequency of the answers and the percentage. The percentages were computed following the following formula:  $\% = N * 100 / T$

The ‘T’ stands for either the total number of obligatory contexts in the interview or for the total number of contexts in which, say, a specific tense should have been used as in the case of written elicitation task.

## 5.2. THE RESULTS

The results of the study are presented separately, in tables and the histograms are also provided, depending on the task. The first task was the interview while the second was the written elicitation. Each table quantifies the results with respect to the category of items. The columns present the required context in which a given tense was expected to be used (this is the

target tense), the prediction(s) to the category of items, i.e., the various tenses which were predicted, and finally the unexpected answers which were called “Other verbal forms”.

The inferential statistics was conducted to compare the control group’s use of the simple past and present perfect tense with the 3 proficiency groups that is, beginner, intermediate, and advanced groups in the context of past completed event. Its goal was to determine whether the control group’s use of the simple past and present perfect tense in the aforementioned contexts was significantly different from that of beginner, intermediate, and advanced groups respectively. Moreover, it also aimed to help draw sound decisions therefore on whether the use of the simple past and the present perfect tense by the 3 proficiency groups could be attributed to transfer or not.

Although the ultimate goal of this study was to examine the kinds of forms that subjects used in different circumscribed contexts rather than merely focusing on comparing the different groups in the study, I hope that inferential statistics will also contribute in inducing sound decisions on the interpretation of the results of this study.

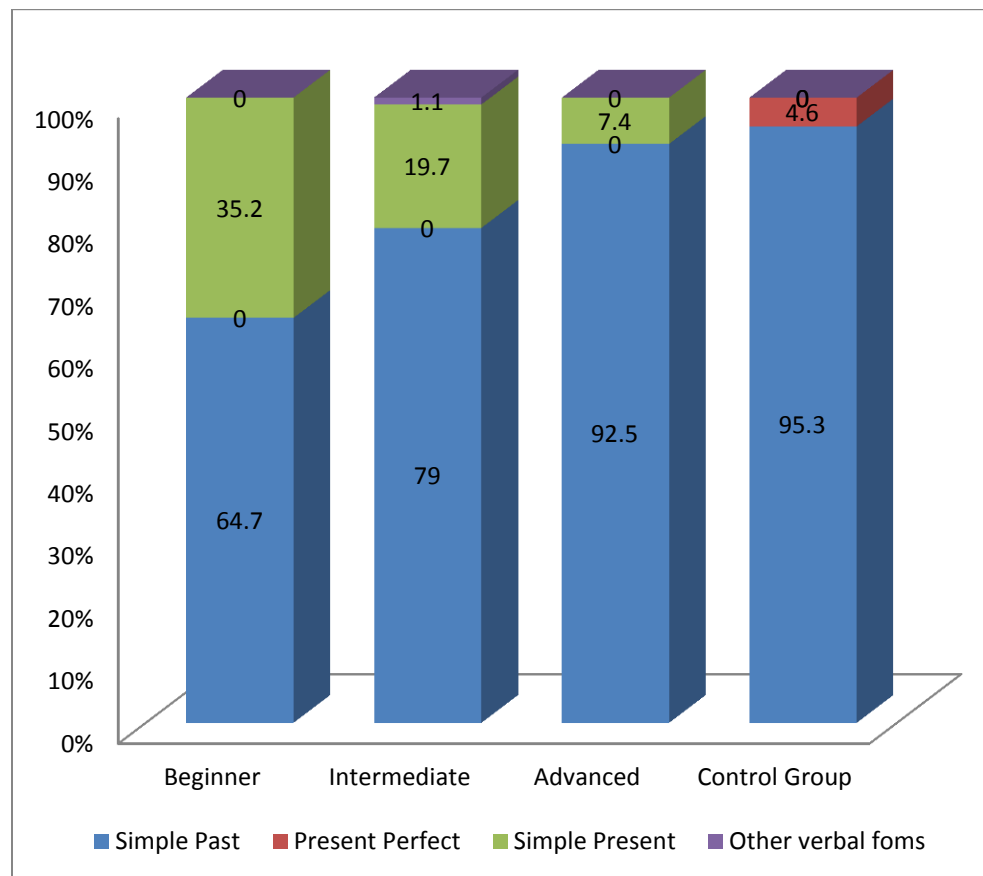
#### Task №1: The interview

**Table 5:** Response types to interview

Response types to interview eliciting the context of past completed event								
Category	Simple Past		Present Perfect		Simple Present		Other verbal forms	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Beginners	66	64.7	0	0	36	35.2	0	0
Intermediate	140	79	0	0	35	19.7	2	1.1
Advanced	162	92.5	0	0	13	7.4	0	0
Control group	41	95.3	2	4.6	0	0	0	0

Figure 1

Interview eliciting the context of past completed event



A one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the control group with the 3 proficiency groups with respect to the use of the simple past tense in the context of past completed event whereby the use of the simple past tense expressed in percentage was the dependent variable and the groups the independent variables. The ANOVA reveals that there was no significant differences between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups [ $F(3, 29) = 2.36, p = .094$ ]. A word of caution should be mentioned that given the small sample size in this study, I suspect that the small sample size might have impacted the statistical power to reach the significant difference between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups.

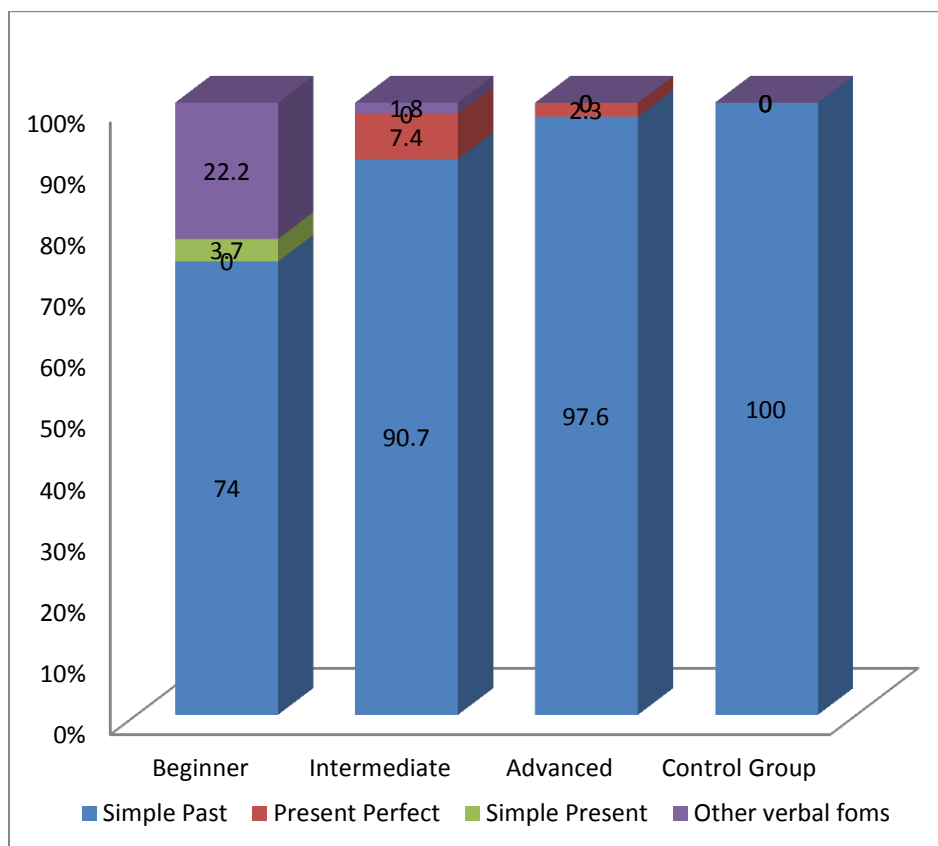
Task №2: The written elicitation task

**Table 6:** Response types to the written elicitation task

Response types to the written elicitation task on past completed event								
Category	Simple Past		Present Perfect		Simple Present		Other verbal forms	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Beginners	40	74	0	0	2	3.7	12	22.2
Intermediate	49	90.7	4	7.4	0	0	1	1.8
Advanced	41	97.6	1	2.3	0	0	0	0
Control group	30	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 2

Written elicitation task on Past completed event



A one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the control group with the 3 proficiency groups with respect to the use of the simple past tense in the context of past completed event whereby the use of the simple past tense expressed in percentage was the dependent variable and the groups the independent variables. The ANOVA reveals that there was no significant differences between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups [ $F(3, 29) = 2.17, p = .11$ ]. As mentioned earlier, the small sample size in this study might have impacted the statistical power to reach the significant difference between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups.

### 5.3. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Both the TPM and CEM predicted that subjects will use, to talk about past completed event, the simple past tense as a result of respectively transfer from the L1 which shows syntactic proximity with the TL and transfer from both the L1 and L2 as a result of cumulated knowledge. The “L2- status factor” predicted that subjects will use the present perfect tense in the aforementioned context.

In the present study, I investigated structural transfer in third language acquisition. In the interview and written elicitation tasks dealing with past completed event the results showed that subjects used the simple past tense in the context of past completed event. The results are contrasted with the predictions of the study in table 7.

**Table 7:** Predictions and the results of the study

CONTEXT	Transfer from L1	Transfer from L2	Transfer from L1 & L2	English	Interview & written elicitation task results
Past completed event	Simple Past (TPM)	Present Perfect (L2 status factor)	Simple Past (CEM)	Simple Past	Simple Past

Referring to the context of past completed event, the results raise the question of knowing whether the use of the simple past tense by the subjects in the context was due to transfer from the previously acquired languages or whether it was the result of successful acquisition of the tense in the L3. The results of the inferential statistics, which I take with reserve, in relation to the use of the simple past tense in the context of past completed event in both tasks, that is, the interview and the written elicitation task fairly shows that there was no significant difference between the control and the 3 proficiency groups. In both the interview and the written elicitation task, the ANOVA showed respectively that there was no significant differences between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups [ $F(3, 29) = 2.36, p = .094$ ] and [ $F(3, 29) = 2.17, p = .11$ ]. However, because of the small sample size of the study, the inferential statistics is not taken into consideration because I suspect that the small sample size of the study might have affected the statistical power to reach the significant difference between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups, yet numerically the difference between those groups are obvious.

Referring to the descriptive statistics, specifically to the numerical results as they are depicted on table 5 and 6, there seem to be obvious differences between the control group and the 3 proficiency groups. It is likely that subjects are tapping their linguistic knowledge from the L1 to express in the TL an event which took place in the past and was completed in the past. However, the possibility of interpreting the results as a consequence of learning from the input is still open because if the use of the simple past tense was solely attributed to transfer effects, we could expect to have more transfer with beginners than with advanced proficiency groups.

Considering the transfer option, the results suggest that when an L1 offers some syntactic similarities with the TL, its (L1) syntactic system becomes transparent and thus accessible to the learners. This finding challenges the claims of the L2 status factor which postulate that the L2



blocks the access to the syntactic system of the L1. I assume that the L2 blocks access to the L1 syntactic system only when the latter does not display any similarities with the syntactic system of the TL.

Should it be mentioned that it is not clear whether transfer from the L1 was due to the effects of previously cumulated linguistic knowledge or just a matter of syntactic proximity which was observed between the two linguistic systems. With reference to the numerical results on the aforementioned tables, I suspect that L1 transfer into the TL in this study was triggered by the syntactic proximity. The great number of simple past tense use by advanced learners in the context of past completed event shows that there was positive transfer or positive learning as I will discuss it later in this section. However, the high use of the simple present tense by beginners at the rate of 35.2% and by intermediate learners at the rate of 19.7% implies that those learners are using the simple past tense but they just fail to inflect the verb with the appropriate past tense inflectional morpheme. The proficiency factor boosts and ameliorates the access to the syntactic system of the L1.

The other reading of the results attributes subjects' performance to learning. It is likely that the use of the simple past tense in the past completed context may be due to learning. It might further be interpreted that subjects successfully learned the use of the simple past tense in past completed event context and that the occurrence of simple present tense use in this context might be just attributed to failure to append the simple past tense inflectional morpheme to the verb stem since subjects have not mastered the morphology inherent to the simple past tense yet.

Furthermore, contrasting their performance in interview versus written elicitation task with reference to subjects' use of the simple present tense in the context of past completed event, it is observed that in the interview whereby subjects had to resort to their implicit knowledge due to

time pressure they made more omission errors than in the written elicitation task which required explicit knowledge. The rate of omission errors was decreasing and correlated with the level of proficiency: beginners 35.2%, intermediate 19.7%, and advanced 7.4%. Whereas, in the written elicitation task, beginners' rate of omission errors was relatively low, i.e., 3.7% while intermediate and advanced subjects did not make any omission error at all. This difference can be accounted for by the type of knowledge one resorted to. In the interview, subjects did not have enough time to think and readjust their speech as they were being interviewed while in the case of written elicitation task, subjects had more time to prepare their answers and to observe that there was an inflectional morpheme missing and they could self-correct their mistakes by appending the omitted simple past tense inflectional morpheme to the verb form.

Figure 1 depicts, in a stairs-like manner, how the use of the simple past tense correlates with the level of proficiency. Inversely, it also depicts how the occurrence of the simple past tense inflectional morpheme omission errors correlates with the same level of proficiency. This reinforces the option that subjects are at a learning stage whereby they have learned that the simple past tense should be used in the context of past completed event but they are still struggling with inflecting the verb with the appropriate morphological marker which will express and mark the simple past tense.

The use of the simple present tense in this context could be justified as the result of error of inflectional morpheme omission. This could imply that subjects made positive transfer but just failed to appropriately inflect the verbs in the past tense. Subjects need more time to reinforce the learning of function/use of the simple past tense which seems to be acquired but mostly to digest and control the appropriate morphological form to append in order to fully acquire the tense.

With reference to the prediction related to past completed event, the use of the simple past tense by the subjects is the result of positive transfer. The use of the simple present tense in this context is considered as the result of error of the simple past tense inflectional morpheme omission.

In light of the research questions which sought to determine the language that takes precedence as source of syntactic transfer in L3 acquisition, the research question which aimed to determine whether the L2 syntactic system blocks the syntactic transfer even when the L1 offers some syntactic similarities with the L3, the interpretation of the results could be twofold. With reference to the inferential statistics, the latter did not have enough statistical power to determine the difference between the control group and the three proficiency groups. The statistical power was affected and weakened by the small sample size of the subjects. However, because of the small sample size in the study which might have affected the statistical power, one can consider looking at the descriptive statistics, particularly the numerical results as they are presented on table 5 and 6. Numerically, it is obvious that there was transfer. Responding to the question ‘Which previously acquired language between the L1, L2, or both L1 & L2 takes precedence in L3 syntactic transfer’ the answer would be that transfer came from the L1.

Answering the second question which aimed to determine whether the L2 was the privileged source of syntactic transfer even when the L1 offers some syntactic similarities with the L3, the answer would be no. The L2 does not serve as the privileged source of transfer when the L1 offers syntactic similarity with the L3.

Finally, attempting to answer the question of knowing whether subjects have more and easy access to their implicit knowledge than the explicit knowledge and therefore transfer more

explicit knowledge than the implicit one when tapping linguistic knowledge from a previously acquired linguistic system, the results have shown that subjects are more accurate when given the opportunity to use their explicit knowledge. This finding corroborates with those of previous studies whereby it was attested that subjects were more accurate when in explicit mode than in implicit one (Schmidt, 2001, 1995; Leow, 1998; Robinson, 1997). It should, however, be noted that the erroneous use of the simple present tense in the context of past completed event was mostly observed in the context of implicit task. This shows and might imply that learners are linguistically unsecured when in implicit mode and thus they become inaccurate when as they rely upon implicit knowledge in their use of the target language.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study attribute the use of the simple past tense in the context of past completed event to positive transfer. However, the possibility of attributing the results to positive learning is also to consider since inferential statistics did not reach any significance differences. The findings of inferential statistics were discarded because they were affected by the small sample size and thus could not determine significant difference between the control and the 3 proficiency groups.

The use of the simple present tense, in the context of past completed event, which cannot be accounted for by transfer in this context is the result of omission of the simple past tense inflectional morpheme. This failure by the subjects to append the simple past inflectional morpheme to the verb to express the simple past tense shows that subjects have not fully acquired the morphology inherent to the simple past tense and this was mostly observed in implicit task.

The study has further shown that subjects were more accurate in using their explicit knowledge than implicit knowledge. They also made more positive transfer from explicit knowledge than from implicit one.

I envisage replicating this study with a representative number of subjects in order to avoid any negative implication on the statistical power. I will integrate the comprehension aspect of language transfer to have a full understanding of both production and comprehension. I further project to present a hierarchical matrix of potential factors which can trigger transfer and rank them in pairs, triplet or in quadruplet depending on the factors which will be controlled. I also

project to integrate the ERP or Eye tracking technique in order to determine how the brain behaves in processing sentences reflecting syntactic transfer from previously acquired languages.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **THE INTERVIEW**

1. Tell me about something that you remember from your life in Congo.
2. Tell me about your two big accomplishments in the last six months.
3. Tell me about your first arrival in the USA.
4. Tell me about something that you would like to do in six months

## APPENDIX B

### THE WRITTEN ELICITATION TEST

Fill in the blanks with the verb provided in the parentheses; use the correct form of the verb.

Example: Mary..... dinner right now (eat).

Correct: Mary is eating dinner right now.

Example: Jeff.....to play guitar (like).

Correct: Jeff likes to play guitar.

1. Joe.....a car 10 years ago (buy).(SP)
2. Abigael.....to Paris soon (travel).(D)
3. Nathan..... in Urbana since 2011(live).(PP)
4. Passy.....food now (cook).(D)
5. Bob and Joe.....soccer at the moment (play).(D)
6. Betty.....home next week (go).(D)
7. Mimie.....London last year (visit).(SP)
8. Paul.....French now (teach).(D)
9. Brendon usually.....French at home (speak).(D)
10. Betty.....to France many times (travel).(PP)
11. Lisette.....rice yesterday (Cook).(SP)
12. Bob sometimes.....very happy (seem).(D)
13. Nathan..... since January at the zoo (work).(PP)
14. Jovany.....basketball tomorrow (play).(D)
15. Allegresse.....in Champaign in 2012 (arrive).(SP)
16. John always.....very fast (drive).(D)
17. Paul.....to church next Sunday (go).(D)
18. Betty.....piano for six years (play).(PP)
19. Bob.....the suspect last week (see).(SP)
20. Joe.....here for 5 years (live).(PP)
21. Betty often.....on Sunday (swim)(D)
22. Paul.....that car next week (buy).(D)
23. Bob.....London several times (visit).(PP)
24. Andy.....to Paris last month (go).(SP)

## APPENDIX C

### THE CLOZE TEST

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Cloze Test

**For each blank in the following passage, please circle one of three options given. Please choose the option appropriate for the context. Please choose one option only for each blank.**

Joe came home from work on Friday. It was payday, but he wasn't \_\_\_\_ (1) **even / more / ever** \_\_\_\_ excited about it. He knew that \_\_\_\_ (2) **then / when / while** \_\_\_\_ he sat down and paid his \_\_\_\_ (3) **checks / bills / salary** \_\_\_\_ and set aside money for groceries, \_\_\_\_ (4) **driving / pay / gas** \_\_\_\_ for the car and a small \_\_\_\_ (5) **deposit / withdrawal / money** \_\_\_\_ in his savings account, there wouldn't be

\_\_\_\_ (6) **quite / not / too** \_\_\_\_ much left over for a good \_\_\_\_ (7) **pleasure / leisure / life** \_\_\_\_.

He thought about going out for \_\_\_\_ (8) **eat / dinner / eating** \_\_\_\_ at his favorite restaurant, but he \_\_\_\_ (9) **just / only / very** \_\_\_\_ wasn't in the mood. He wandered \_\_\_\_ (10) **around / at / in** \_\_\_\_ his apartment and ate a sandwich. \_\_\_\_ (11) **In / For / After** \_\_\_\_ a while, he couldn't stop himself

\_\_\_\_ (12) **for / from / about** \_\_\_\_ worrying about the money situation. Finally, \_\_\_\_ (13) **he / she / it** \_\_\_\_ got into his car and started \_\_\_\_ (14) **drive / driven / driving** \_\_\_\_.

He didn't have a destination in \_\_\_\_ (15) **head / mind / fact** \_\_\_\_, but he knew that he wanted

\_\_\_\_ (16) **be / to be / being** \_\_\_\_ far away from the city \_\_\_\_ (17) **which / there / where** \_\_\_\_ he lived. He turned onto a quiet country \_\_\_\_ (18) **road / house / air** \_\_\_\_. The country sights made him feel

\_\_\_\_ (19) **as good / better / best** \_\_\_\_. His mind wandered as he drove \_\_\_\_ (20) **past / in / to** \_\_\_\_ small farms and he began to \_\_\_\_ (21) **try / think / imagine** \_\_\_\_ living on his own piece of \_\_\_\_ (22) **house / land / farm** \_\_\_\_ and becoming self-sufficient. It had always \_\_\_\_ (23) **being / been / be** \_\_\_\_ a dream of his, but he

\_\_\_\_ (24) **having / have / had** \_\_\_\_ never done anything to make it \_\_\_\_ (25) **a / one / some** \_\_\_\_ reality. Even as he was thinking, \_\_\_\_ (26) **their / his / her** \_\_\_\_ logical side was scoffing at his

\_\_\_\_ (27) **favorite / practical / impractical** \_\_\_\_ imaginings. He debated the advantages and

\_\_\_(28) **cons / disadvantages / problems**\_\_\_ of living in the country and  
\_\_\_(29) **growing / breeding / building**\_\_\_ his own food. He imagined his  
\_\_\_(30) **farmhouse / truck / tractor**\_\_\_ equipped with a solar energy panel \_\_\_(31) **at / out /**  
**on**\_\_\_ the roof to heat the house \_\_\_(32) **in / for / over**\_\_\_ winter and power a water  
heater. \_\_\_(33) **She / He / They**\_\_\_ envisioned fields of vegetables for canning \_\_\_(34) **either /**  
**and / but**\_\_\_ preserving to last through the winter. \_\_\_(35) **Whether / Even / If**\_\_\_ the crops  
had a good yield, \_\_\_ (36) **maybe / possible / may**\_\_\_ he could sell the surplus and \_\_\_(37)  
**store / save / buy**\_\_\_ some farming equipment with the extra  
\_\_\_(38) **economy / cost / money**\_\_\_.

Suddenly, Joe stopped thinking and laughed \_\_\_(39) **at / out / so**\_\_\_ loud, "I'm really  
going to go \_\_\_(40) **through / away / in**\_\_\_ with this?"

Adapted from American Kernel Lessons: Advanced Students' Book. O'Neill, Cornelius and  
Washburn (1981).

## APPENDIX D

### SELF-RATING FOR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Rate your proficiency in French and English (speaking, reading, writing, listening) according to the following scale (write the number next to each skill):

6 = NATIVE FLUENCY

3 = UPPER INTERMEDIATE

5 = NEAR (ALMOST) NATIVE FLUENCY

2 = LOWER INTERMEDIATE

4 = ADVANCED FLUENCY

1 = BEGINNING LEVEL

French		English	
Skill	Rating	Skill	Rating
Speaking		Speaking	
Writing		Writing	
Reading		Reading	
Listening		Listening	

1. Overall, how would you rate yourself:

6 = NATIVE FLUENCY

3 = UPPER INTERMEDIATE

5 = NEAR (ALMOST) NATIVE FLUENCY

2 = LOWER INTERMEDIATE

4 = ADVANCED FLUENCY

1 = BEGINNING LEVEL

## APPENDIX E

### PARTICIPANTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING HISTORY

Informations linguistiques concernant les sujets de recherche

Title: Multilingual background questionnaire for Lingala-French-English Speakers

(This information will be kept confidential/ ces informations seront gardées secrètes)

Participant research ID number/numéro d'identité de recherche pour le sujet: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of origin/pays d'origine: \_\_\_\_\_

County of current residence/pays de residence actuelle: \_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Personal Data/Informations personnelles

1. What is your level of education/ Quel est votre niveau d'éducation?

a. High school/diplôme d'état    b. some college/études supérieures non achevées

c. college, university, graduate/ études supérieures, Universitaires, études post universitaires

2. How long have you lived in Urbana –Champaign (USA? / Depuis quand que vous êtes à Urbana-Champaign (USA?)

#### II. Family History /Informations Familiales

3. What language did you grow up speaking /Quand vous grandissiez quelle est la langue que vous parliez:

At home / à la maison: \_\_\_\_\_

With friends/avec les amis: \_\_\_\_\_

At school/à l'école: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What language do you speak the most in daily basis/quelle langue vous parlez de plus au quotidien?
5. What language do you speak the least on a daily basis?under which occasion?/ quelle langue vous parlez de moins au quotidien? Dans quelles circonstances?

### **III. Linguistic History/Informations linguistiques**

6. What age did you start to learn English\_\_\_\_\_, French\_\_\_\_\_? /A quel age avez vous commencé à apprendre l'Anglais: \_\_\_\_\_, le Français: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Was French spoken at home alongside with Lingala? /Est-ce que le Français était parlé à la maison au même moment que l'Anglais?
8. What language did your parents speak at home? / Quelle est la langue que tes parents parlaient à la maison ?
9. What language did you speak with your siblings and relatives at home ?/Quelle est la langue que tu parlais avec tes frères et sœurs et autres membres de la famille à la maison?
10. What language did your siblings and relatives use when speaking to you ?/Quelle est la langue que tes frères et sœurs et autres membres de la famille utilisaient en communiquant avec vous ?
11. Which language did you use with your classmates outside the class? / Quelle est la langue que tu parlais avec tes condisciples de classe une fois que vous étiez en dehors de la classe ou après les cours?



12. What language do you usually speak at home here in the USA? Quelle langue tu parles d'habitude à la maison ici aux Etats Unis?
13. What language do you usually speak at the work place in the USA/ quelle langue tu parles d'habitudes au lieu de travail ici aux Etats Unis?
14. What language do you usually speak with friends once you are outside the work place here in the USA/ quelle langue tu parles d'habitude avec les amis une fois que tu es hors de lieu de travail ici aux Etats Unis?